

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

The top of page two of the Official Action notes that a certified copy of the Japanese priority application filed on December 13, 2002 has not been submitted. As a point of clarification, this application claims priority based on Japanese Application No. 2002-304643 filed on October 18, 2002 (rather than December 13, 2002). Also, a certified copy of Japanese Application No. 2002-304643 was submitted on February 17, 2004. The Patent Office's PAIR system appears to include an entry for that date indicating receipt of the certified copy of the priority application. Examiner Estremsky is kindly asked to confirm that the certified copy of the priority application has been received.

Appreciation is expressed to Examiner Estremsky for indicating that Claim 3 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter recited in Claim 3, and Claim 3 has been canceled. Thus, Claim 1 together with dependent Claims 2, 4 and 5 are allowable over the prior art.

Claims 1, 2, 4 and 5 have been amended without narrowing the claim scope to address the various issues noted on pages 2-4 of the Official Action. For example, Claim 1 has been amended to improve the readability of the claim and now recites that the open member is movable between the unlocked position in which the open member engages with the lift lever in one direction by movement of the open lever to move the lift lever and the locked position in which the open member idly engages with the lift lever by movement of the open lever and then becomes engaged with the lift lever in another direction when the open member is switched

toward the unlocked position from the locked position without causing the lift lever to move in a manner resulting in operation of the latch mechanism. This claim wording recites the way in which the claimed features interact with one another. The description in the specification provides a more thorough discussion of this aspect of the door lock device. For example, the paragraph beginning in line 16 of page 11 of the application describes in more detail that when the open member is in the unlocked position, the movement or operation of the open lever causes the open member to engage the lift lever in one direction (i.e., in the upward direction of Fig. 5 in the disclosed embodiment). On the other hand, as discussed in greater detail beginning at the top of page 13 of the application, when the open member is in the locked position the movement of the open lever causes the open member to idly engage the lift lever, and then when the open member is switched toward the unlocked position from the locked position the open member becomes engaged with the lift lever in another direction (i.e., in the generally rightward direction of Fig. 8 in the disclosed embodiment) without causing the lift lever to move in a manner resulting in operation of the latch mechanism.

It is believed that the amended wording of Claim 1 removes the somewhat awkward original claim wording. The Claim 1 wording defines the various structural features of the door lock device (e.g., the lift lever, the open lever, the open member, etc.) and also recites the way in which those features interact with one another during operation of the door lock device. It is believed that Claim 1 particularly points out and distinctly claims the door lock device at issue here.

Finally, the wording in the dependent claims has also been amended, as has been the wording in original Claim 3 that has now been incorporated into independent Claim 1.

In light of the foregoing, withdrawal of the claim objections and the claim rejection based on 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph is respectfully requested.

Early and favorable action with respect to this application is respectfully requested.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application, the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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